
Regional Council Activity Report

February 27, 2008



Executive Director's Report

At the February Regional Council meeting, an extended discussion was held on the Regional 9-1-1 System and the Community Emergency Notification System (CENS). Both of these systems are critical emergency communication systems and both are facing funding issues.

Currently, three percent of the 9-1-1 fund is utilized for administrative costs. A bill being considered at the Legislature, House Bill 2381, will increase the percentage from three percent to five percent and assist greatly in resolving our 9-1-1 issue. We encourage all MAG member agencies to support this measure.

What is unclear is how we will be able to continue to fund the CENS program, which enables public safety agencies to use MAG's 9-1-1 database to quickly call groups of residents to notify them of an emergency in their area, such as major fires, public safety threats, flash floods, hazardous materials spills, police incidents, and endangered children or elderly persons. This issue is especially critical because CENS is not currently funded by the excise tax, and the CENS program will run out of funding in July of this year.

The irony of this situation is that, until 2006, the monthly 9-1-1 excise tax was 37 cents. In 2006, the Legislature reduced the tax to 28 cents and to 20 cents in 2007, where it currently remains. What appears to have happened is that the Legislature needed to balance the budget in tough economic times and used the large fund balances in the 9-1-1 system to address funding issues. Coincidentally, these reductions were happening at a time when the technology of 9-1-1 needed to be improved to deal with mobile phones, and systems such as CENS.

To date, the 9-1-1 fund continues to carry a surplus of funds (approximately \$45 million—largely from 9-1-1 projects which are encumbered). This surplus is projected to run out in 2010. The State Department of Administration, which administers the fund, is reluctant to add additional programs such as CENS, unless the 9-1-1 fund is put on a more sustainable foundation.

It is important that we have a viable 9-1-1 system and a CENS program. This is even more important due to our national security issues. It is interesting to note that the CENS function was recently used in our Homeland Security exercise. We encourage your support for funding for 9-1-1 and CENS.

For more information, please contact Dennis Smith, MAG Executive Director, or Nathan Pryor, Senior Policy Planner, (602) 254-6300.

Regional Council Meeting Report for Wednesday, February 27, 2008**Action Items****Ozone Resolution**

The Regional Council moved to adopt a resolution requesting that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) provide sufficient time for existing measures to take effect in the implementation of a more stringent eight-hour ozone standard.

Over time, several aggressive measures have been adopted by the Arizona Legislature, local governments, and the federal government, which have been successful in eliminating violations of the current eight-hour ozone standard.

For more information, please contact Lindy Bauer, MAG Environmental Director, (602) 254-6300.

Council Adopts Revised MAG Highway Acceleration Policy

The MAG Regional Council voted to adopt a revised MAG Highway Acceleration Policy. The revised policy comes at the recommendation of the MAG Management Committee, which formed a working group to review and recommend revisions to the policy. The recommended revised policy includes improvements and clarifications that bring the policy in line with Proposition 400 and should result in a more effective process. The revised policy also includes recommendations made in February by the Transportation Policy Committee. Below are the recommended changes to the policy:

- Incorporate the Transportation Policy Committee as the body that makes the recommendation to the MAG Regional Council.
- Clarification that the policy covers all freeway and highway projects that are included in the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) Life-Cycle Program for the MAG region.
- A requirement to have a council resolution that shows support and demonstration of financial commitment for the proposed acceleration before MAG takes action on the request.
- Clarification that projects within an accelerated time frame should not be included in the Transportation Improvement Plan or used in conformity calculations until the parties have entered into an intergovernmental agreement.
- Replacement of the interest sharing formula with a fixed equal sharing (50/50) interest expense between the jurisdiction and the regional freeway program.
- A requirement that MAG be party to the intergovernmental agreement between ADOT and the jurisdiction.
- A prohibition of using "below the line" earmarks to accelerate projects.
- Various minor wording changes.

For more information, please contact Eric Anderson, MAG Transportation Director, (602) 254-6300.

Regional Council Supports 9-1-1 Legislation

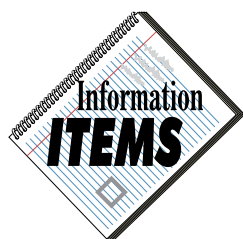
As discussed in the Executive Director's report above, the MAG Regional Council voted to support HB 2381, increasing the amount for administrative costs from three percent to five percent. The bill would allow the MAG 9-1-1 Office to retain the staff required for continuous updating of wireless mapping. In addition to its support of the bill, the Regional Council asked that MAG explore with the Legislature increasing the administrative costs up to eight percent. The Regional Council also encouraged the Legislature to provide a permanent funding source to continue the Community Emergency Notification System (CENS.) The fund, which has supported CENS since its inception, will be depleted by the end of FY 2008.

For more information, please contact Dennis Smith, MAG Executive Director, (602) 254-6300.

Incarceration of Municipal Prisoners Stakeholders Group Update

In May 2007, the MAG Management Committee formed a Stakeholders Group to examine the Maricopa County bookings and prisoner per diem rates and explore possible options to improve the current system. The Stakeholders Group met six times during the past year and recommended several improvements in communication and process, possible options for cost savings, and useful research and information. Among the recommendations was an agreement that Maricopa County will provide preliminary draft rates on December 1 of each year, with final rates provided on February 1 of each year. Other recommendations were that MAG will assist the county in updating rate notification lists for member agencies, that the Sheriff's Office will encourage expansion of videoconferencing for adjudication into all jail locations (and with more participating communities,) and that member agencies may wish to monitor and adjust adjudication of prisoners on multiple jurisdictional charges. The Regional Council voted to accept the options developed by the Stakeholders Group.

For more information, please contact Jeff Romine, MAG Senior Regional Economist, (602) 254-6300.



Information Items

Building a Quality Arizona

An update was provided on ongoing efforts to address statewide transportation challenges through a process known as "Building a Quality Arizona." At its December 2007 meeting, the Regional Council recommended that MAG work cooperatively with ADOT and the COG/MPO Association in developing a series of transportation framework studies and that MAG provide information that will describe the transportation challenges facing this region, including representative projects that are part of the approved Regional Transportation Plan.

The Regional Council discussed a number of outstanding questions for a potential statewide vote, including questions on revenue sources and how major amendments

are addressed. ADOT requested that MAG prepare a “critical needs” list to provide to the Governor by mid-March to gain an idea of the magnitude of needs.

Regional Council members expressed concerns similar to those of the Transportation Policy Committee regarding developing the list before the transportation framework studies are completed. The Regional Council noted that, because we are an area designated as being in nonattainment for air pollutants, all transportation projects must undergo air quality conformity analysis, making it difficult to submit projects for consideration.

Staff reported that the Transportation Policy Committee has directed that MAG work cooperatively with ADOT and the Governor to provide information about the impact of cost increases for the Proposition 400 plan and the potential to accelerate projects, to identify unfunded needs at the programmatic and conceptual level, to review input for the 2007 Governor’s Transit Executive Order, and to develop a formula to establish funding needs for local streets.

The item was on the agenda for information and discussion, and no action was taken by the Regional Council.

For more information, please contact Eric Anderson, MAG Transportation Director (602) 254-6300.



Next Regional Council Meeting

The next meeting of the MAG Regional Council is scheduled for Wednesday, March 26, 2008, at 5:00 p.m. in the Saguaro Room, 302 N. 1st Avenue, Phoenix. Agenda items are expected to include, among others, a request to accelerate the Union Hills/Loop 101 traffic interchange widening, an update on the FY 2009 MAG Unified Planning Work Program and Annual Budget, priority listing of applicants for FTA Elderly and Persons with Disabilities Transportation Program, and a MAG 208 Water Quality Management Plan amendment for the City of Goodyear Sonoran Valley Planning Area.

For more information, please contact Dennis Smith, MAG Executive Director, (602) 254-6300.